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prove the composite character of the Pentateuch come to naught. Their assumption of the existence of duplicate and discrepant statements as a pervading feature of the Pentateuch are but assumptions, nothing more. The way in which the several alleged redactors have handled the material is most unfortunate for the historical value of their work, as there is no way of ascertaining how far they may have warped the accounts from their proper original intent by their well-meant but mistaken efforts at correcting or harmonizing them. Then does not the history of the Mosaic age rest upon a quicksand? Can anything of consequence be certainly known regarding it? It is not enough for the holders of these critical views to tell us that they believe in the truth of the Pentateuch, that they believe it to be inspired of God, and that they believe it to be infallible in all matters of faith and duty. Of course we do not question these statements of their personal faith, but this does not prove their critical theories to be harmless, and we have shown that their hypotheses undermine the historical truth, the divine inspiration, and the authority of the Pentateuch. The general acceptance of their view must lead ultimately to the denial of its inspiration even in that qualified sense in which these critics profess to accept it now, as well as to the denial of its veracity as history, as surely as the tree will bear fruit after its own kind.

It is interesting to compare this statement by Prof. Green of his views concerning the composition of the Pentateuch, with that of Prof. E. C. Bissell in his recent *Christian Union* article, a synopsis of which appeared in the February STUDENT. Prof. Green makes no concessions of any sort to the higher criticism, while Prof. Bissell finds a certain amount of truth in their hypotheses. Gradations exist within the conservative school of critics as well as within the progressive school. Do not these many variations of view signify that we are only working toward, and have not yet reached, the complete truth about the origin of the first five Old Testament books, taking them as a particular instance of the whole problem as to the origin of the Scriptures? Is it not therefore advisable to proceed with caution and good humor, being especially careful to avoid any misrepresentation or incrimination of those who see the matter differently from ourselves,—this at least until there can be brought about a larger agreement among the members themselves of the two respective schools. It isn't so much the individual opinion of any one scholar, as it is the collective opinion of a large number of scholars, that men recognize as authoritative in these problems. To secure such agreement should be the objective of all this discussion at present, and it may be questioned whether it is wise to appeal to the masses in support of one's position when the solution depends so largely upon knowledge which only a scholar can acquire.

The Virgin-Birth—Its Expectation and Publication.* The question before us is, when did the idea and knowledge of the virgin-birth of the Messiah enter the public mind? (1) Was this virgin-birth a feature of the Messianic expectation prior to the advent of Christ? There was certainly no official method for clearly discerning this mark in the eagerly awaited Messiah. Mary's reply to the angel's announcement (Lk. 1 : 34) is diametrically opposed to any such idea on her part. Joseph would scarcely have meditated divorce (Matt. 1 : 19) if he had been aware of such an expectation. There is nothing in the history of the period to indicate that there was any such phase of the Messianic expectation. It was psychologically impossible beforehand to read in or into Isaiah's "Immanuel prophecy" (7 : 14) any such event as took place in Mary. The fulfillments of prophecies indicated in the first two chapters of Matthew are of the Rabbinical type, and are at least questionable. (2) Was

* By Prof. W. F. Steele, Ph. D., in *Methodist Review*, Jan.-Feb. 1892.

there after the advent and during the life of Jesus a belief that his virgin-birth would be a credential of the Messiah? In case of one claiming to be the Messiah, the inquiry as to the manner of his birth would then be one of the first questions asked. Yet there is no record that either His Jewish enemies or Jesus himself ever introduced the subject of the manner of his birth. That Joseph was his actual father was everywhere and always assumed (Lk. 2 : 48 ; 4 : 22 ; Matt. 13 : 55 ; Jno. 1 : 45 ; 6 : 42 ; et al). Matthew, writing two generations after the birth of Jesus, makes Joseph's adoptive relation clear (Matt. 1 : 16), but he does so in the light of facts made known after Jesus' death. Our records give freely the mocking charges made against Christ by his foes (Lk. 7 : 34 ; 15 : 2 ; Jno. 8 : 48), but there is never a breath of Jewish scandal about his birth. The only satisfactory view is, that the virgin-birth was not anticipated, nor during Jesus' life once thought of as a credential of Messiahship. (3) When, then, did Jesus' virgin-birth become known? Joseph did not tell of it. Mary apparently trusted to divine providence to bring forth that truth when and where proper. Even up to the moment of death on the cross, when the facts of Jesus' life and his claims for himself were all known, the virgin-birth was unknown to any, save his mother. But in the light of the resurrection and exaltation of her Son, and the bursting forth of the Christian Church, what more natural than that the long-closed heart should open, and that the long-sealed lips should attest to the other Marys, to Peter, to John and Luke, the long-pondered, the now believable (Jno. 3 : 4, 13 ; 16 : 12), the now explained and explanatory fact, of his virgin-birth?

The writer's treatment of his theme is careful and commendable, though at times lacking in due delicacy. The conclusion at which he arrives is that of most scholars in the Church, and seems the only one which corresponds with the facts as we have them. The vital discussion relating to the early chapters of Matthew and Luke does not concern the subject of Prof. Steele's paper, but questions what he assumes—the historicity of the accounts of the virgin-birth of Jesus. This is a less easy and a more important problem.

The Inerrancy of Scripture.* In this contention as to the absolute inerrancy of Scripture, seeing as I think truth on both sides, I am desirous of saying a calm and mediating word, which is this: *Revelation, but not Inspiration, necessarily implies inerrancy.* What God expressly reveals must be true ; but many have come beneath the inspiration of his Spirit without being rendered infallible thereby. It seems to me that the stress of the argument for the authority of Scripture is changing. It is the revealed rather than the inspired character of the Bible which nowadays renders the Bible authoritative. That the record exists is due to Inspiration, but that the record is the supreme arbiter in matters of faith and practice, is due to Revelation. He who believes most strongly that the errancy of Scripture is relatively unimportant, and he who can hold firmly to the inerrancy of revelation, will be calm and confident during the present controversy. Has the Bible a message for man as man that is found nowhere else, does it contain a series of unique revelations from God to man? The truest anthropology and the truest soteriology are the Biblical. Then the question of absolute inerrancy becomes merely theoretical and esoteric. So long as the Bible convinces the practical man, to say nothing of the diligent student of its pages, of its unique Divine origin, its unique prophecy, its unique apostolic teaching, its unique Gospel, what matters it whether the

* By Prin. Alfred Cave, D. D., in *Homiletic Review*, Feb. 1892.